



# Illinois's 33%: Report on Illinois Poverty

January 2013

The scale and conditions of poverty make it one of the most pressing social issues facing our state and nation. Over 48.5 million people in the United States are living in poverty, 1.9 million of them in Illinois.<sup>1</sup> Poverty will touch the majority of Americans at some point during adulthood. **On average, 60% of 20 year olds in America will experience poverty at some point during their adult years, and about half of adults will experience poverty by the time they are age 65.**<sup>2</sup> In addition, one third of the overall population of the United States will experience extreme poverty in their lifetimes, with incomes below half of the poverty line.

As the latest Report on Illinois Poverty is released, Heartland Alliance is celebrating its 125th anniversary, and we have refocused our organizational mission squarely on ending poverty. We are doing this work in collaboration with federal, state, and local governments and others—including witnesses to poverty, funders, businesses, community-based organizations, and communities of faith.

We know that we can't end poverty without fully understanding the nature, scale, and scope of the issue. This year's Report on Illinois Poverty brings us back to these basics. It explores who is poor in Illinois, why poverty exists in the first place, what hardships being poor induces, and how we can end poverty. It also gives voice to our neighbors experiencing poverty as they talk about their challenges living in, getting out, and staying out of poverty. Throughout the report, listen to Witnesses to Poverty and hear their voices directly as they share their stories.

It is clear that we have our work cut out for us:<sup>3</sup>

**33%**

share of Illinoisans  
in poverty or near it

**3.1**

percentage point  
increase in Illinois  
poverty since 2007

**22%**

share of Illinois  
children in poverty

**7%**

share of Illinoisans in  
extreme poverty, below  
half of the poverty line

The preamble of the Illinois Constitution lists eliminating poverty as a fundamental goal of the state. It is our hope at Heartland Alliance that after seeing the problem of poverty laid out so clearly in this report and listening to our neighbors' experiences, the citizens of Illinois and our state leaders will be compelled to follow Heartland's lead and refocus the state's mission on ending poverty.

*"We, the People of the State of Illinois...in order to provide for the health, safety and welfare of the people; maintain a representative and orderly government; eliminate poverty and inequality; assure legal, social and economic justice; provide opportunity for the fullest development of the individual; ensure domestic tranquility; provide for the common defense; and secure the blessings of freedom and liberty to ourselves and our posterity—do ordain and establish this Constitution for the State of Illinois."*<sup>4</sup>

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# CAUSES OF POVERTY

**A**t its core, poverty exists because of employment-related reasons—people aren't working, aren't working enough, and/or aren't making enough money. But characterizing it in this way is an oversimplification that fails to account for the *why*: why people aren't working, why they aren't working enough, and why they aren't making enough money.

There are large economic forces at play, like high unemployment, declining wage levels, and growing inequality, that help explain these employment-related causes of poverty and point to how structural inequities translate to racial and gender disparities in economic well-being.

But even this expanded view of the economic forces behind employment realities is too limiting for understanding the complex nature of poverty. Factors related to education, housing, health, and assets also contribute to a person's chances of being able to succeed through work—and not experience poverty.

Furthermore, as much as these factors contribute to poverty's existence, they are also symptoms of poverty, existing in a symbiotic relationship whereby hardship can induce poverty and poverty can reinforce hardship.

## Witness to Poverty



Carolyn | Wheaton, IL



*"Even a \$1 cup of coffee at McDonalds is not possible for me... to me that's like \$100."*

[Click here](#) to see other personal stories of individuals who have witnessed poverty and hardship and shared their stories with us.

## Employment

Unemployment Rate<sup>5</sup>

Nov 2012

8.7%

### A weak economy means higher poverty.

- Every 1 percentage point rise in the unemployment rate causes a 0.5 percentage point increase in the poverty rate.<sup>6</sup>

### But it's not just about the availability of jobs; job quality—wages paid, benefits offered, hours available—matters a great deal.

- Over the long term, growth in income inequality has been the driving force behind increases in poverty. After controlling for changes in the racial, family, and education composition of the nation, income inequality is responsible for a 5.5 percentage point increase in poverty from 1979 to 2007.<sup>7</sup>

- Employment has shifted to low-paying industries since the 1980s, leading to an explosion of low-wage work. Low-wage workers are more likely to be female, minority, non-college educated, and young.<sup>8</sup>
- A 10% increase in median wages lowers the poverty rate by about 1.5 percentage points.<sup>9</sup>
- Poverty-wage workers—paid an hourly wage that keeps a family of four below the poverty line even when working full time—are 3 times less likely to have health insurance through their jobs and nearly 4 times less likely to have pension coverage than non-poverty-wage workers.<sup>10</sup>

## Education

Non-Graduation Rate<sup>11</sup>

2011-2012

17.7%

### The better educated a person is, the more likely they will avoid economic hardship and poverty since they are more likely to get a good-quality job.

- Non-poverty-wage workers are more than 3 times as likely to have a college degree than poverty-wage workers.<sup>12</sup>

### There was a time when a worker could get a good job with just a high school diploma or even without one, but these levels of education simply don't command as much value in the job market as they did several decades ago.

- In inflation-adjusted terms, a worker with a high school diploma earned \$17.11 in 1973 compared to \$15.89 in 2011, a decline of 7%. A worker without a high school diploma earned \$14.93 in 1973 and \$11.82 in 2011, a decline of 21%.<sup>13</sup>

## Housing

Severely Rent-Burdened Households<sup>14</sup>  
2011

26.4%

Housing problems in the form of cost burden, housing discrimination, evictions, foreclosures, and dilapidated and unsafe conditions have a tremendous impact on families' bottom lines and can trigger poverty and homelessness.

- In Illinois, there are only 59 available affordable rental units for every 100 low-income renter households.<sup>15</sup>

With the unfolding of the Great Recession and housing crisis, Americans lost tremendous amounts of their net worth, and minorities fared far worse than whites.

- Latino households lost 86% of their net worth from 2007 to 2010, black households 50%, and white households 36%.<sup>16</sup>

## Health & Nutrition

Health Uninsurance Rate, Ages 0 to 64<sup>17</sup>  
2011

14.8%

Health problems lead to greater economic hardship since they limit a person's ability to work, and health care costs—even when insured—are expensive. By causing poor health, low levels of energy, and other impairments, hunger can lead to still greater poverty by diminishing people's ability to work and learn.

- People with disabilities are twice as likely to be unemployed as people without disabilities, and they have significantly lower incomes.<sup>18</sup>
- Medical problems caused 62% of all personal bankruptcies filed in the United States in 2007, and three quarters of those filers had medical insurance at the start of their illness.<sup>19</sup>

## Assets

Asset Poverty Rate<sup>20</sup>  
2009

26.4%

When families don't have a financial cushion to fall back on in tough times or when work isn't an option (such as in old age or disability), they don't have a shield against poverty.

- A family of three needs \$4,632 in savings to subsist at the poverty level for at least 3 months if their income suddenly stops, yet over 1 out of every 4 Illinois households does not have this amount saved.<sup>21</sup>

Risky financial products and lack of access to affordable loans erode wealth and often pile on excessive fees and interest, creating financial traps for people in poverty.

- There are nearly twice as many alternative cash checkers and short-term loan providers per capita in low-income neighborhoods than in higher-income neighborhoods. For the 22% of unbanked and underbanked Illinois households, these businesses represent a needed but risky service due to high fees and interest rates.<sup>22</sup>



# PROFILE OF POVERTY

The Report on Illinois Poverty website, [www.ilpovertyreport.org](http://www.ilpovertyreport.org), contains easily accessible county-level data on poverty and income, employment, education, housing, health and nutrition, and assets.

Explore indicators of hardship in your community, download free customizable data sets, make PDF fact sheets, post data to social media, and much more.

Check it out!

Poverty and hardship in Illinois are not limited to one area of the state or one group of people; rather, every single county, region, legislative district, and race and age group struggles with poverty and related challenges.

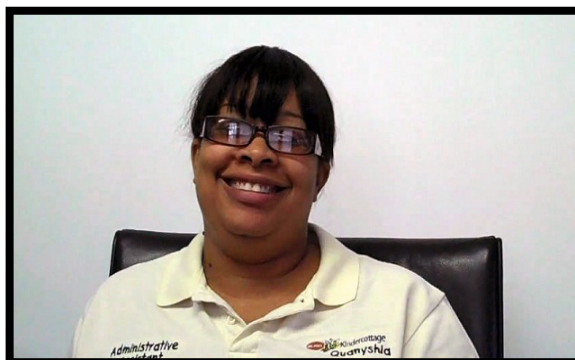
On the following pages, poverty is presented through a number of different lenses, all contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of poverty:

- First, through the **Illinois Poverty Profile** we see the scope, scale, and geography of poverty, which drives home the magnitude of the problem—the growing magnitude.
- Second, through the **Chicago Region Poverty Profile** we take a closer look at the most populous region of the state—home to 65% of the state's population—to understand the dynamics of poverty in Chicago, Suburban Cook County, DuPage County, Kane County, Lake County, McHenry County, and Will County.
- Third, through the **Poverty Population Profile**, we delve deeper into the question of who is poor in Illinois, drilling down by characteristic to understand poverty's universal reach but also its disproportionate impact on certain groups.

Understanding this fundamental information about poverty in our state helps us craft systems of response and solutions that are tailored to the realities of the people struggling to make ends meet.

2011 Federal Poverty Thresholds			
Family Size	Extreme Poverty (0-49% FPL)	Poverty (0-99% FPL)	Low Income (100-199% FPL)
1	\$5,742	\$11,484	\$22,968
2	\$7,329	\$14,657	\$29,314
3	\$8,958	\$17,916	\$35,832
4	\$11,511	\$23,021	\$46,042

## Witness to Poverty



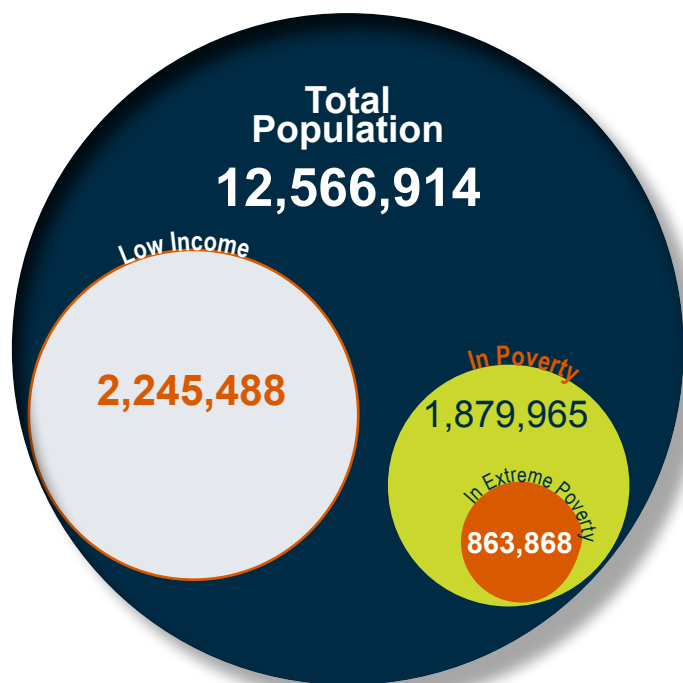
*"It taught me about myself... that I wasn't too good to ask for help. Because that's what it was—just a stepping stone, to bigger and better things for myself."*

Click here to see other personal stories of individuals who have witnessed poverty and hardship and shared their stories with us.

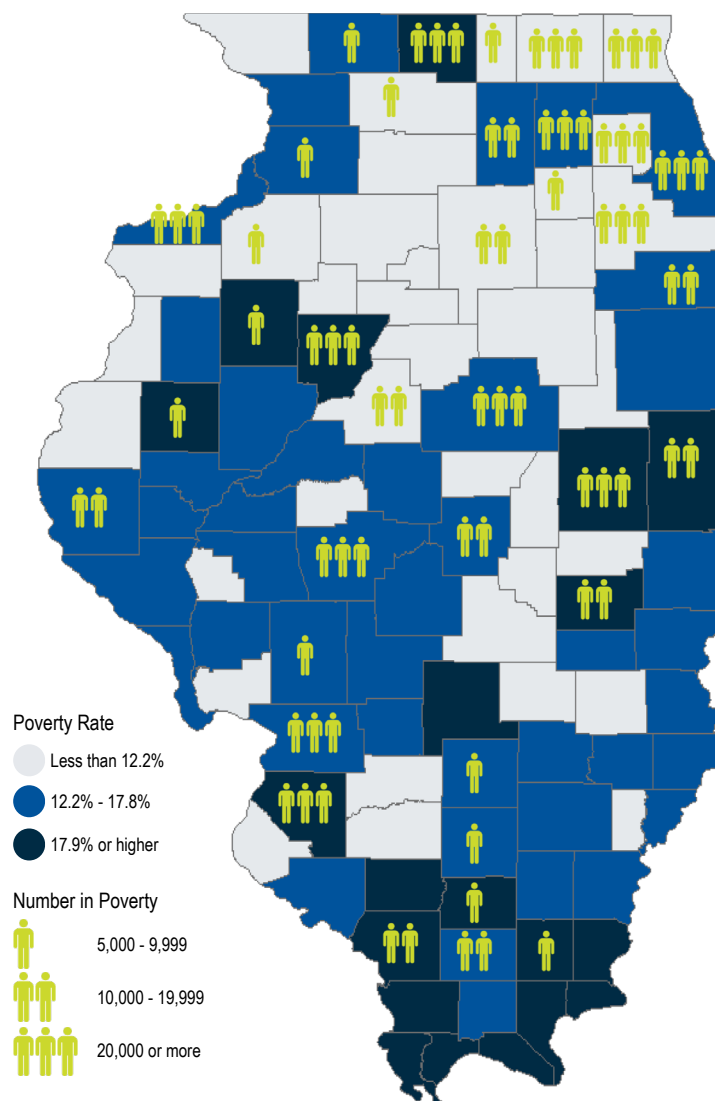
Quanyshia | East St. Louis, IL

# Illinois Poverty Profile

Scale of Illinois Poverty, 2011<sup>23</sup>



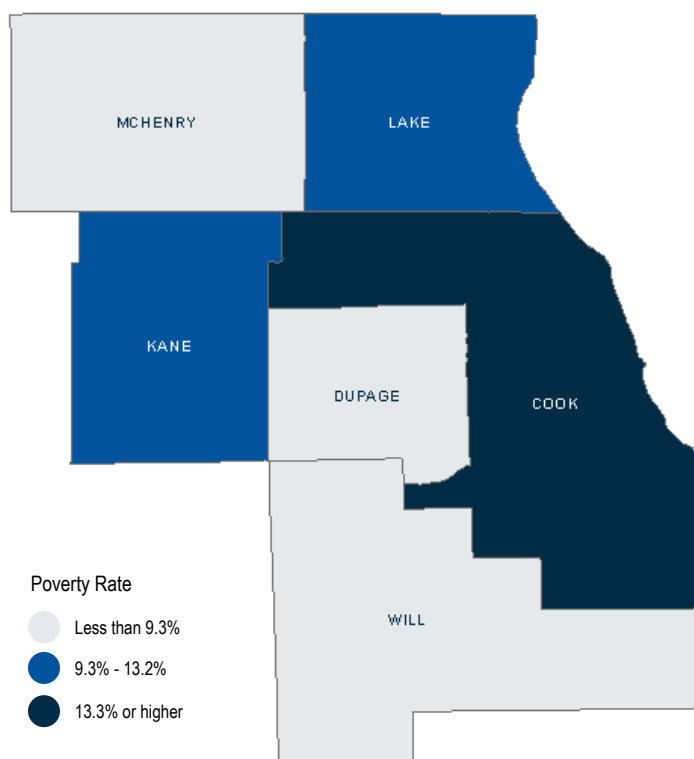
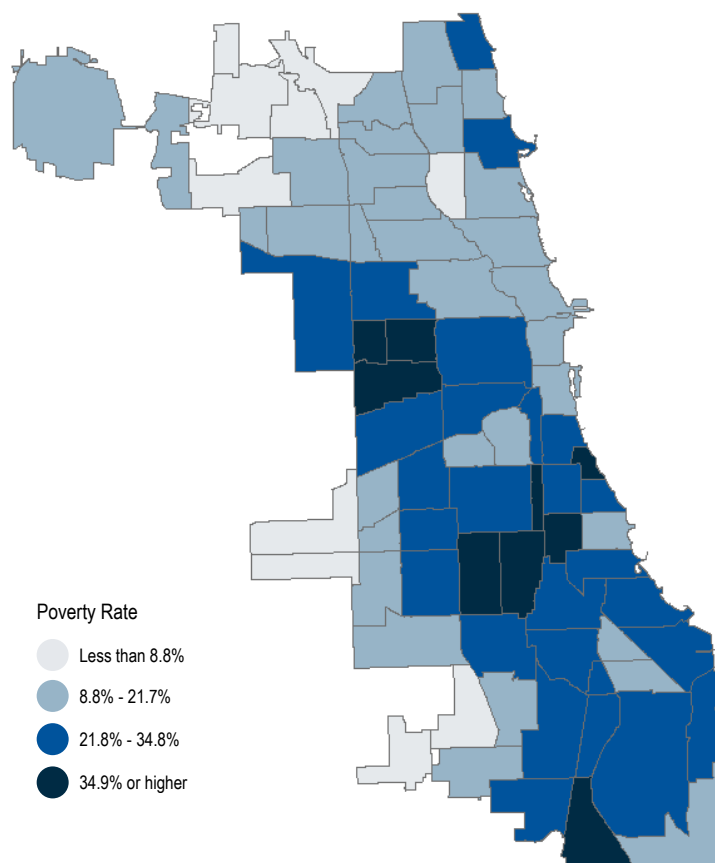
Illinois Poverty, 2011<sup>24</sup>



Illinois Poverty Over Time, 2007-2011<sup>25</sup>



# Chicago Region Poverty Profile

Chicago Region Poverty Rates, 2011<sup>26</sup>Chicago Community Area Poverty Rates, 2011<sup>27</sup>Scale of Chicago Region Poverty, 2011<sup>28</sup>

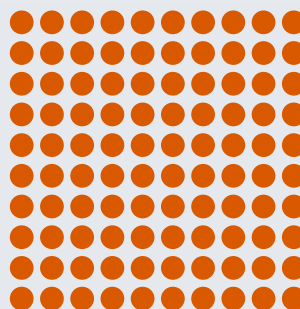
Geography	Extreme Poverty (under 50% FPL)	Poverty (under 100% FPL)	Low income (100%-199% FPL)
Chicago	298,403 (11.2%)	629,464 (23.7%)	585,671 (22.0%)
Suburban Cook County	122,291 (4.9%)	275,768 (11.1%)	421,828 (17.0%)
Cook County	420,694 (8.2%)	905,232 (17.6%)	1,007,499 (19.6%)
DuPage County	28,384 (3.1%)	70,073 (7.7%)	108,060 (11.9%)
Kane County	24,606 (4.8%)	67,635 (13.2%)	83,183 (16.2%)
Lake County	31,714 (4.6%)	78,190 (11.4%)	97,565 (14.2%)
McHenry County	7,893 (2.6%)	28,226 (9.2%)	36,182 (11.8%)
Will County	22,379 (3.3%)	55,089 (8.2%)	87,255 (12.9%)
<b>6-County Region</b>	<b>535,670 (6.5%)</b>	<b>1,204,445 (14.6%)</b>	<b>1,419,744 (17.3%)</b>

# Poverty Population Profile

## If the population of Illinoisans in poverty were 100 people...

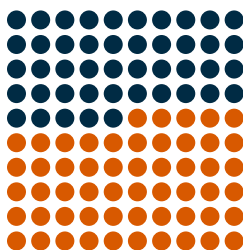
(but really, it's closer to 1.9 million Illinoisans, 15.0%, in poverty)

Social IMPACT Research Center's analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's 2011 American Community Survey 1-year estimates program.



### gender

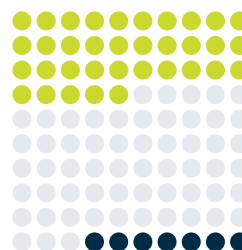
**45** are male  
(846,939, 13.8%, in poverty)



**55** are female  
(1,033,026, 16.1%, in poverty)

### age

**35** are children, under 18 (658,340, 21.6%, in poverty)

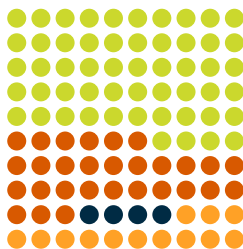


**7** are seniors, 65 and over (130,083, 8.2%, in poverty)

**58** are working age, 18 to 64 (1,091,542, 13.8%, in poverty)

### race

**54** are white  
(1,007,522, 11.0%, in poverty)

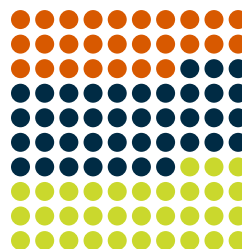


**4** are Asian (70,328, 12.0%, in poverty)

**13** are another race  
(246,837, 23.3%, in poverty)

### family composition

**27** are in married-couple families  
(513,969, 6.8%, in poverty)

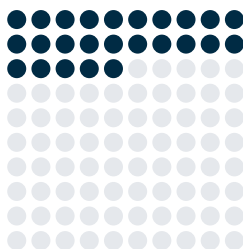


**33** are in other living arrangements  
(470,898, 22.8%, in poverty)

**40** are in single-female headed families (753,072, 34.3%, in poverty)

### ethnicity

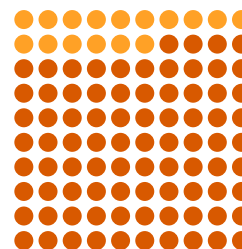
**25** are Latino  
(462,168, 22.6%, in poverty)



**75** are non-Latino  
(1,417,797, 13.5%, in poverty)

### nativity

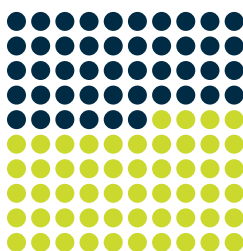
**16** are foreign born  
(296,553, 16.7%, in poverty)



**84** are native born  
(1,586,298, 14.7%, in poverty)

### extreme poverty

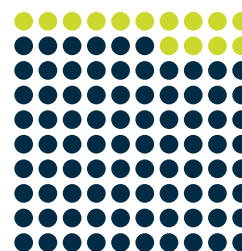
**46** are in extreme poverty, 0-49% FPL  
(863,868)



**54** are between 50-99% FPL (1,016,097)

### disability

**14** have a disability  
(272,209, 20.7%, in poverty)



**86** do not have a disability (1,607,660, 14.3%, in poverty)

# SPOTLIGHT: Populations in Poverty

Despite poverty's wide reach, the fact remains that some groups of people are more likely to experience poverty, or their experience with poverty is different than others'.

- For some groups, such as **minorities** and **women**, their overrepresentation in poverty represents a legacy of unequal opportunities that have hindered economic advancement.
- For others, like **children and youth**, their poverty story is intertwined with their families' and with a broken safety net that lets children remain impoverished.
- Yet others, like **workers**, come face-to-face with the shortcomings of our market economy or have unique, sometimes challenging disadvantages to deal with.

This section hones in on these Illinois populations and paints a picture of how poverty impacts them and what their experience with hardship is like. To be sure, these are certainly not the only populations in need or even necessarily those in greatest need, but focusing on women, children and youth, workers, and minorities gives us a glimpse of a cross-section of our neighbors impacted by poverty.

## Witness to Poverty



Nateka | Champaign, IL



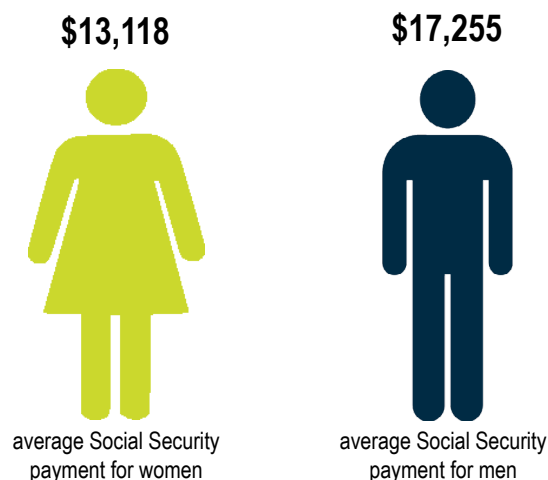
*"It's really hard to find a job when you don't have a college degree... It's almost like, you can't get a job... but you can't have education without money, so it's like an ongoing circle and a cycle."*

Click here to see other personal stories of individuals who have witnessed poverty and hardship and shared their stories with us.

# Women

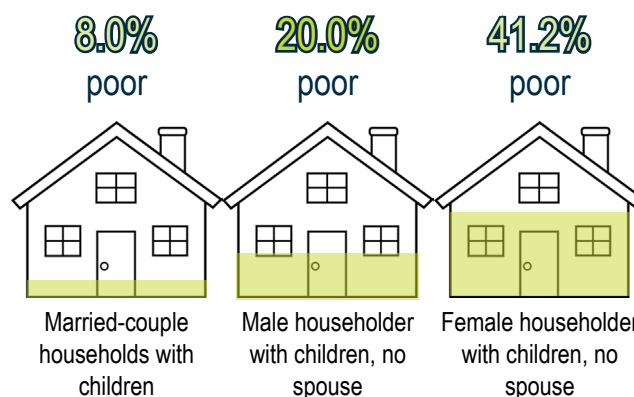
Women are particularly vulnerable to poverty across the lifespan for a number of reasons, including being paid less at work, having child rearing and other care giving responsibilities that limit hours available to work or require leaving the workforce altogether for a time, and having much smaller retirement cushions.

Basic annual living costs for older adults in Illinois communities range from \$17,364 to \$33,200. While low for both men and women, average annual Social Security payments are particularly insufficient for women.



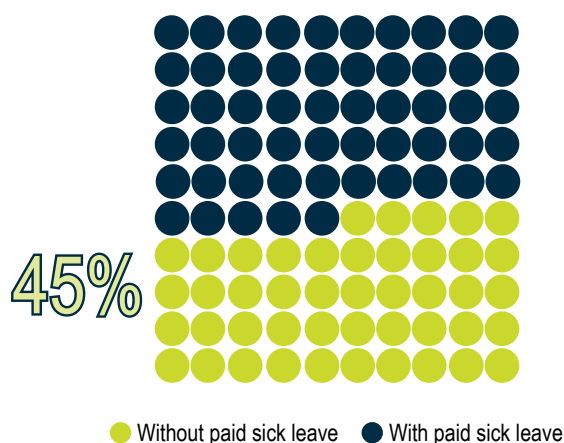
Health & Medicine Policy Research Group and Wider Opportunities for Women. (2011). *Elder Economic Security Initiative (EESI)—Illinois*. Available at [http://hmpg.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/ElderEconomicSecurity\\_Illinois.pdf](http://hmpg.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/ElderEconomicSecurity_Illinois.pdf).

Female-headed households with children and no spouse are significantly more likely to be in poverty than male-headed households with children and married-couple households with children.



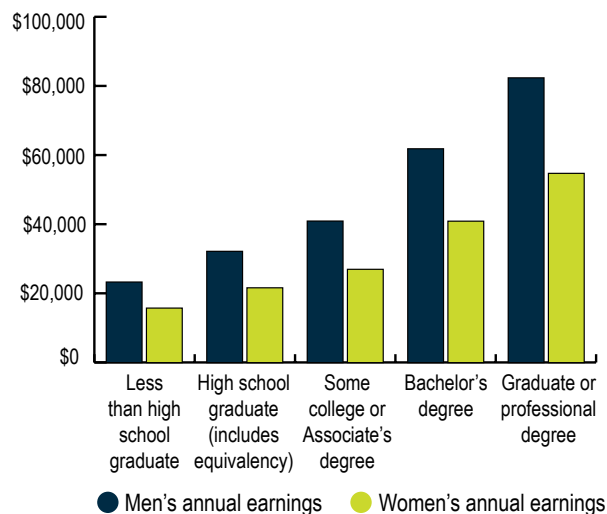
Social IMPACT Research Center's analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's 2011 American Community Survey 1-year estimates program.

**Nearly half** of all private sector employees in Illinois don't have access to paid sick leave, which poses particular challenges for women with caregiving responsibilities.



Institute for Women's Policy Research. (2011). *Access to paid sick days in the states, 2010*. Available at <http://www.iwpr.org/initiatives/family-leave-paid-sick-days/#publications>.

At all levels of educational attainment, median annual earnings for Illinois women are much lower than for men.

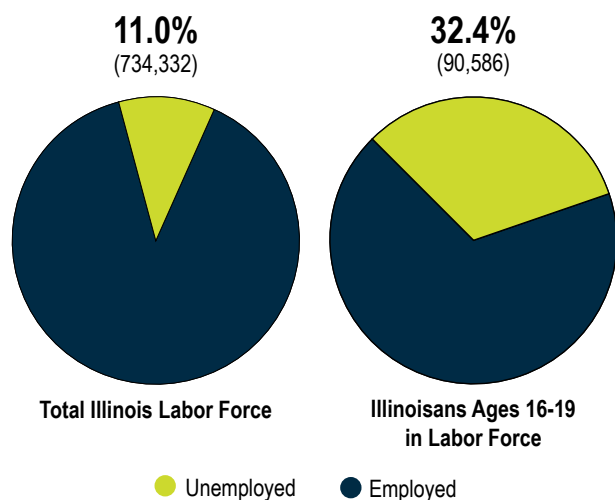


Social IMPACT Research Center's analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's 2011 American Community Survey 1-year estimates program.

# Children & Youth

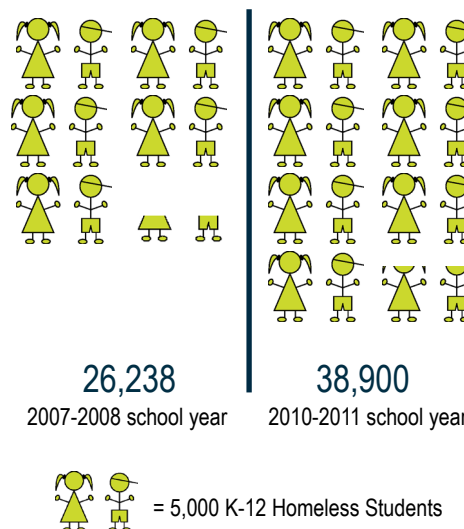
Poverty has detrimental effects on children's physical and psychological well-being and cognitive development. The early years of a child's life in particular are critical in terms of cognitive development and academic achievement since early differences tend to persist and compound, making it difficult to make up lost ground.

Illinois youth ages 16 to 19 are nearly **3 times** as likely to be unemployed as Illinois workers overall.



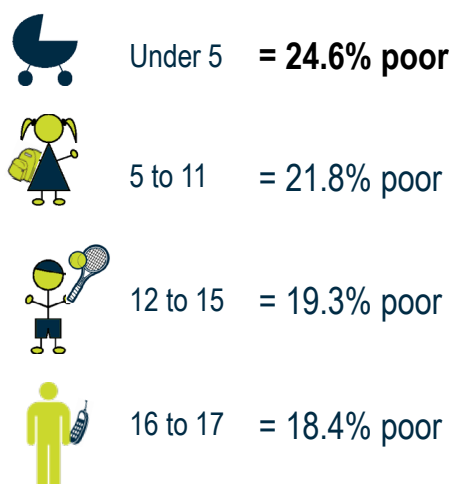
Social IMPACT Research Center's analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's 2011 American Community Survey 1-year estimates program. Reflects civilian labor force.

Since the recession began, the number of homeless students enrolled in Illinois public schools has increased **48%**.



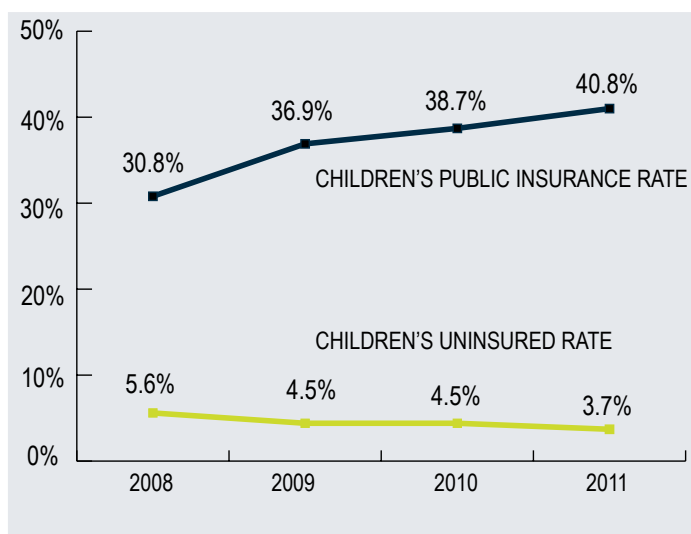
National Center for Homeless Education. (2012, June and 2011, June). *Education for homeless children and youth programs data collection summary*. Available at [http://center.serve.org/nche/prl/data\\_comp.php](http://center.serve.org/nche/prl/data_comp.php).

While every child age group has a higher poverty rate than adults, the youngest Illinois children are the most susceptible to poverty.



Social IMPACT Research Center's analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's 2011 American Community Survey 1-year estimates program.

Public insurance has played a critical role in reducing the share of uninsured Illinois children.



Social IMPACT Research Center's analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's 2008, 2009, 2010, and 2011 American Community Survey 1-year estimates program.

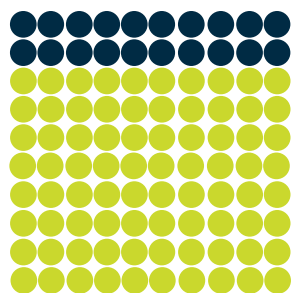


# Workers

Hundreds of thousands of workers in Illinois are finding out that having a job—even a full-time job—is not always enough to stay out of poverty and avoid hardship. A combination of low-quality job opportunities, wage stagnation and inequality, and skills disconnect, among other factors, contribute to Illinois workers and their families experiencing poverty.

Of the 400,000 minimum wage workers in Illinois:

80%



● Minimum wage workers who are age 20 and over

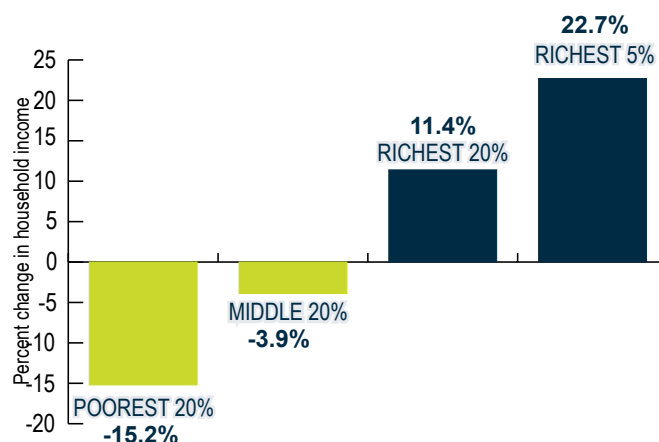
39%



● Minimum wage workers who work full time

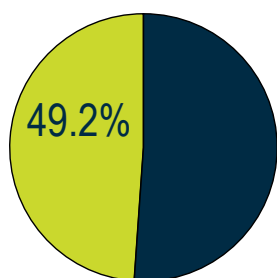
Social IMPACT Research Center's analysis of King, M., et al. (2010). Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, 2012 Current Population Survey: Version 3.0 [Machine-readable database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota.

Income inequality has worsened substantially in Illinois, evident in household income changes by income group from the late 1990s to mid 2000s.

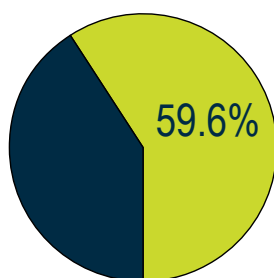


McNichol, E., Hall, D., Cooper, D., & Palacios, V. (2012, November). *Pulling apart: A state-by-state analysis of income trends*. Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute & Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Available at <http://www.cbpp.org/cms/index.cfm?fa=view&id=3860>.

Over half of all private sector workers in Illinois lack access to an employment-based retirement plan, and lower-wage workers are the least likely to have access.



Higher-wage workers

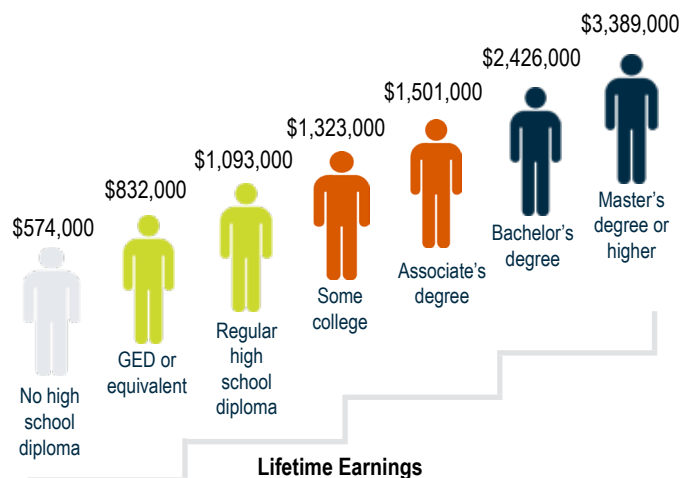


Lower-wage workers

● Without access to employment-based retirement plan  
● With access to employment-based retirement plan

Woodstock Institute. (2012). *Coming up short: The scope of retirement insecurity among Illinois workers*. Available at <http://www.woodstockinst.org/blog/blog/retirement-insecurity-pervasive-in-illinois,-new-report-shows/>. Higher wage = \$40,000 and over per year; lower wage = under \$15,000 per year.

Over their lifetimes, Illinoisans who drop out of high school make hundreds of thousands, even millions, of dollars less than their graduating and higher-educated peers.

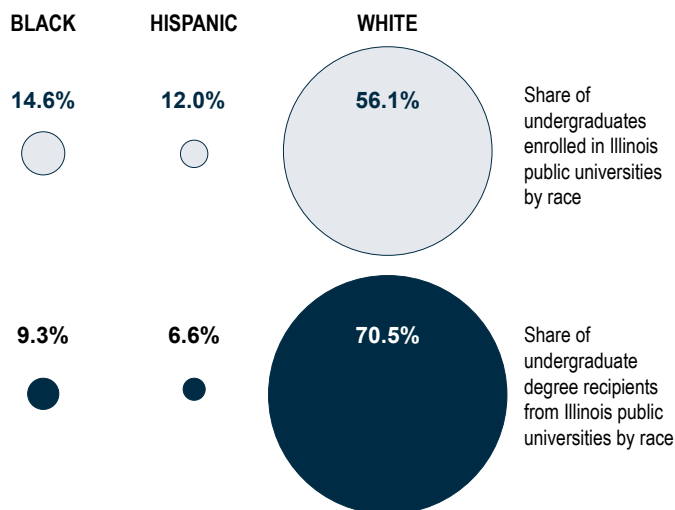


Sum, A., & Khatiwada, I. (2012, November). *High school dropouts in Chicago and Illinois and their persistent labor market problems*. Chicago: Center for Labor Market Studies, Northeastern University. Reflects 18 to 64 year olds.

# Minorities

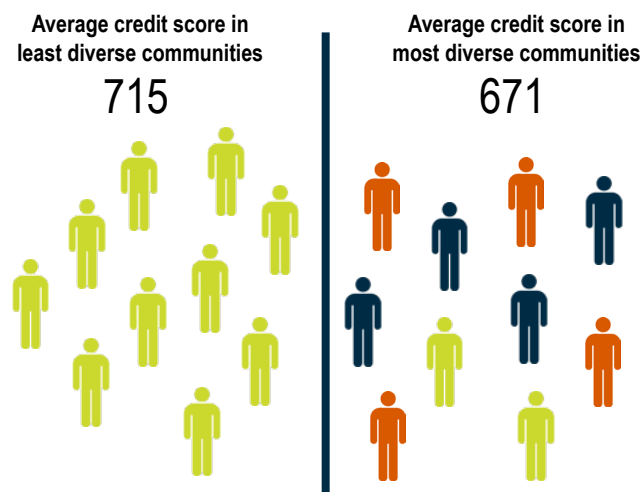
Despite the real progress made in our country, there is still a racial gap in economic opportunity. Racial disparities are caused by a mix of historic and current policies that created barriers to equal opportunity. Barriers for minorities still exist today—albeit more subtly—for example, in structural inequalities in how schools are funded and in different levels of access to financial services and credit.

Undergraduate minorities in Illinois are less likely than their white counterparts to receive a degree.



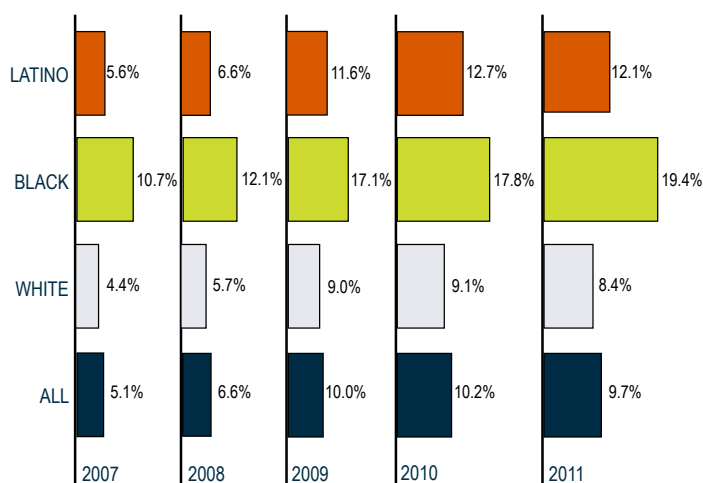
Social IMPACT Research Center's analysis of the Illinois Board of Higher Education. *2011 State of Illinois Board of Higher Education, data book on Illinois higher education*. Available at <http://www.ibhe.org/Data%20Bank/DataBook/default.asp>.

Illinois communities that are more diverse have worse average credit scores, indicating racial disparities in access to affordable credit and wealth-building opportunities.



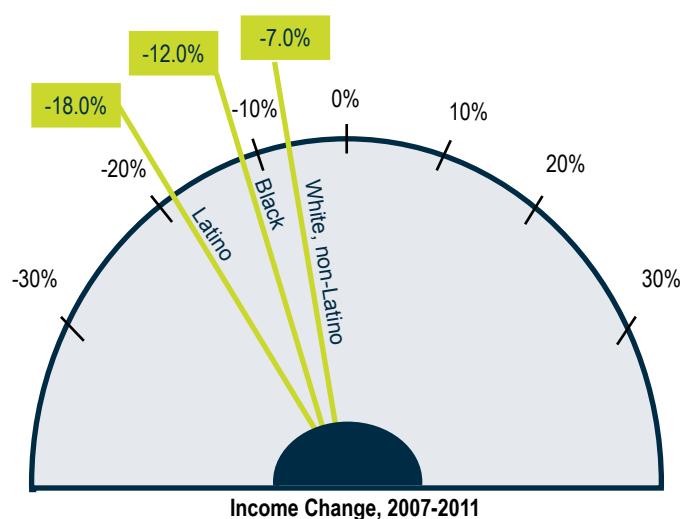
Social IMPACT Research Center's analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's 2011 American Community Survey 1-year estimates program and aggregate data provided by a large national credit bureau for a snapshot of credit and debt by region, dated June 2012. No individual or customer data were provided.

Minority workers were harder hit by job loss in the recession than white workers, and their unemployment rates have been slower to go down.



Social IMPACT Research Center's analysis of the Illinois Department of Employment Security, Local Area Unemployment Statistics. *Characteristics of employed and unemployed*. Available at <http://www.ides.illinois.gov/page.aspx?item=2514>.

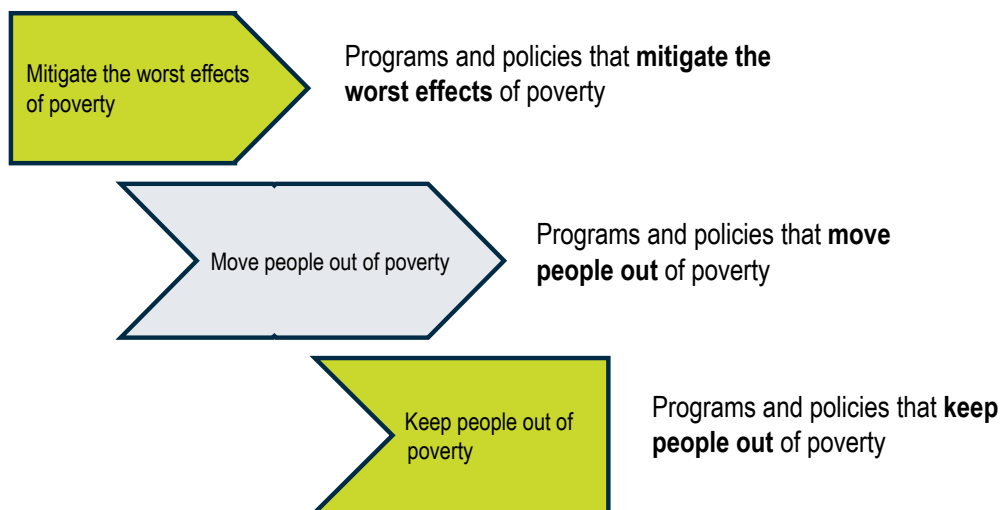
The disproportionate impact of the recession on Illinois minorities is evidenced in how steeply median family income fell for minority families compared to white families from 2007 to 2011.



Social IMPACT Research Center's analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's 2007 and 2011 American Community Survey 1-year estimates program. 2007 data updated to 2011 dollars using the CPI-U-RS.

# SOLUTIONS TO POVERTY

Just as there is no single pathway into poverty, there is no single pathway out—no magic bullet policy or program that will single-handedly eradicate poverty. There are, however, myriad solutions that target each issue area related to poverty—employment, education, housing, health and nutrition, and assets—and that affect poverty in three different ways:



Though useful, this paradigm may create a false sense of distinctiveness, and we should be careful not to think about poverty solutions too narrowly. Instead, Illinois should weave together solutions from each issue area and from each level to form a cross-cutting and holistic poverty reduction approach.

To this end, the following pages highlight the importance of investments in each issue area and give examples of policies and programs that mitigate poverty, move people out, and keep people out. Each section culminates with a State Policy Opportunity, denoted by the symbol to the right, that the Illinois General Assembly can act on in the next year to demonstrate its commitment to honoring our state Constitution's goal of eliminating poverty.



## Witness to Poverty



Rodney | Chicago, IL



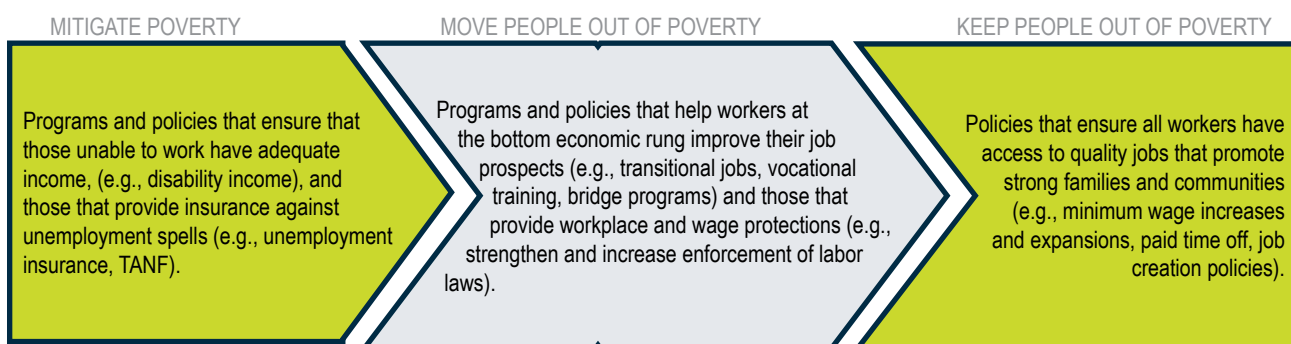
*"If it's not for my subsidy, I would be probably sleeping under Wacker Drive."*

Click [here](#) to see other personal stories of individuals who have witnessed poverty and hardship and shared their stories with us.

# Employment and Education

## Employment

Financial security is essential to human dignity and is the backbone of a strong Illinois community and economy. The current economic climate underscores the need for the development of quality jobs that allow individuals to work and not live in poverty as well as a strong and responsive safety net that helps jobless workers, low-wage workers, and those unable to work to support their families.

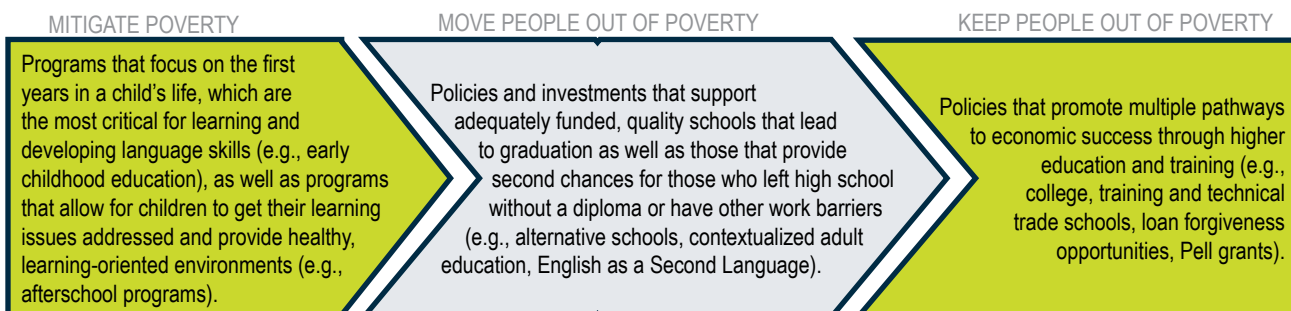


### State Policy Opportunity:

Increase Illinois's minimum wage and index it to inflation to maintain a baseline investment in Illinois workers. Expand the categories of workers covered by the minimum wage to include workers receiving tips, domestic workers, and workers under the age of 18.

Quality and equitable education is the foundation for economic mobility. To enable academic success, all students need full access to opportunities and education supports, with a specific focus on disadvantaged students. Evidence-based education models, coupled with family supports and access to health care, help to maximize each student's learning potential, positioning Illinois for global advantage.

## Education



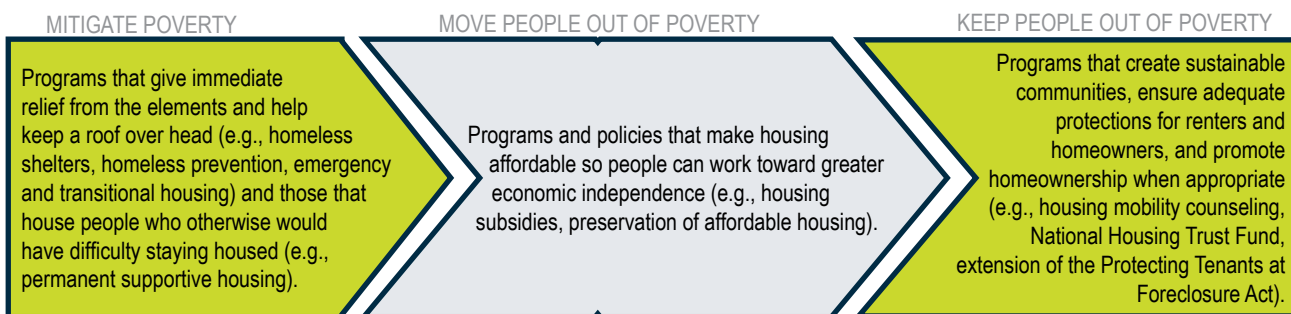
### State Policy Opportunity:

Increase access to Illinois's 529 college savings program, making it easier for more families to take advantage of this important college savings tool. Exempt 529 accounts from the asset limit test on TANF, create a safe default investment option, and implement a matched savings program.

# Housing and Health & Nutrition

Safe, decent, and affordable housing is the cornerstone of economic security. With investments in affordable housing and protections for renters and owners, people can pull through economic crises and remain stably housed.

## Housing

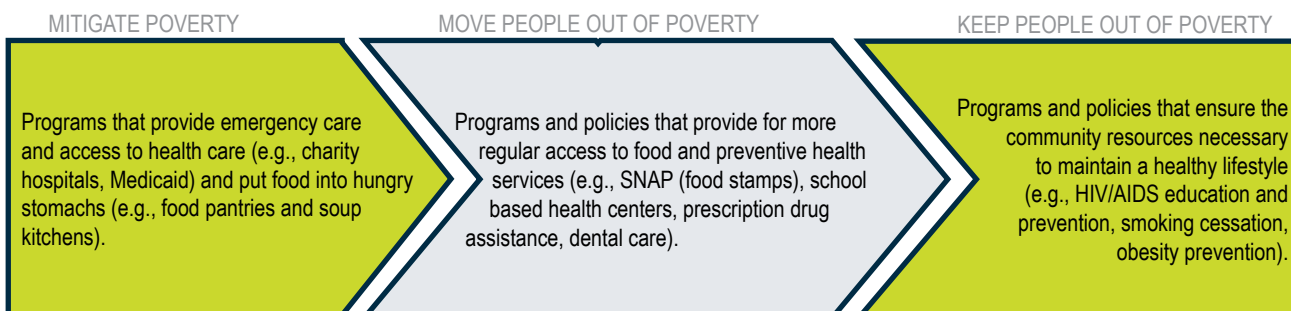


### State Policy Opportunity:

Return homeless prevention and homeless service program funding to their historic levels as an effective way to help families maintain housing stability in the face of temporary hardship and prevent the personal and financial costs associated with homelessness.

## Health & Nutrition

Health care and nutritious food are essential for individual and family well-being and success. Sufficient, accessible, and affordable food and medical care, available to all ages regardless of income level or work status, is a cost-effective investment in wellness.



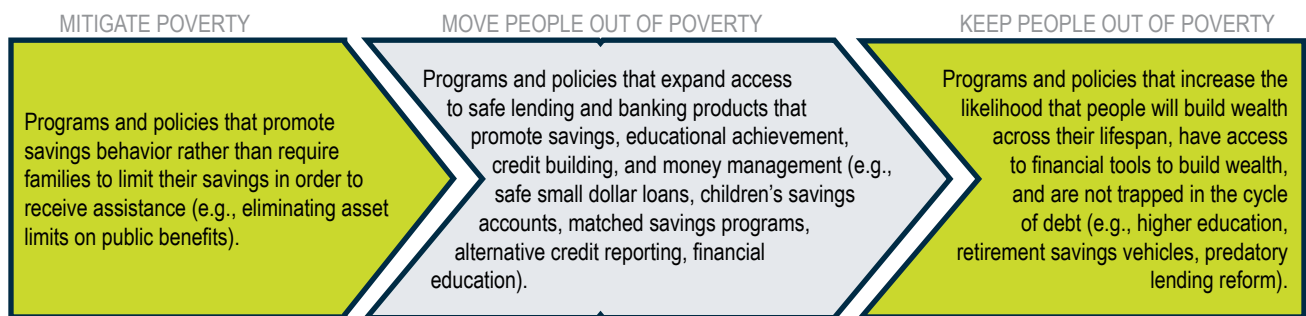
### State Policy Opportunity:

Expand access to health care by fully implementing the Affordable Care Act's Medicaid expansion and state-based health insurance exchange and supporting Illinois's transition to care coordination programs in order to improve health outcomes and maximize cost-effective strategies.

# Assets

## Assets

Assets are tools that families use to build financial security for themselves and for their children. Examples of assets include education, safe banking products, a strong credit score, college savings, and retirement savings. Policies that protect assets against erosion and promote asset accumulation ensure economic security today and advancement for future generations.



### State Policy Opportunity:

Expand retirement savings opportunities by creating an automatic retirement account program for Illinois workers that utilizes employer payroll systems and gives workers the option of depositing a portion of earned wages into approved retirement accounts.

## Witnesses to Poverty



Illinois's 33% aren't just a statistic. They are our neighbors, our friends, and our family members.

Hear them tell their own stories about what it's like living in poverty. Also hear them speak to the critical supports that allow them to live with a little less hardship and begin their journey out of poverty.

Visit [www.ilpovertyreport.org/witness](http://www.ilpovertyreport.org/witness) to listen.

*Join the Social IMPACT Research Center and Heartland Alliance in 2013 as we celebrate Heartland Alliance's 125th year of fighting to end poverty in Illinois and throughout the world. Contact the Social IMPACT Research Center to request research services that can help your organization achieve its mission, and support Heartland Alliance in our work to end poverty.*

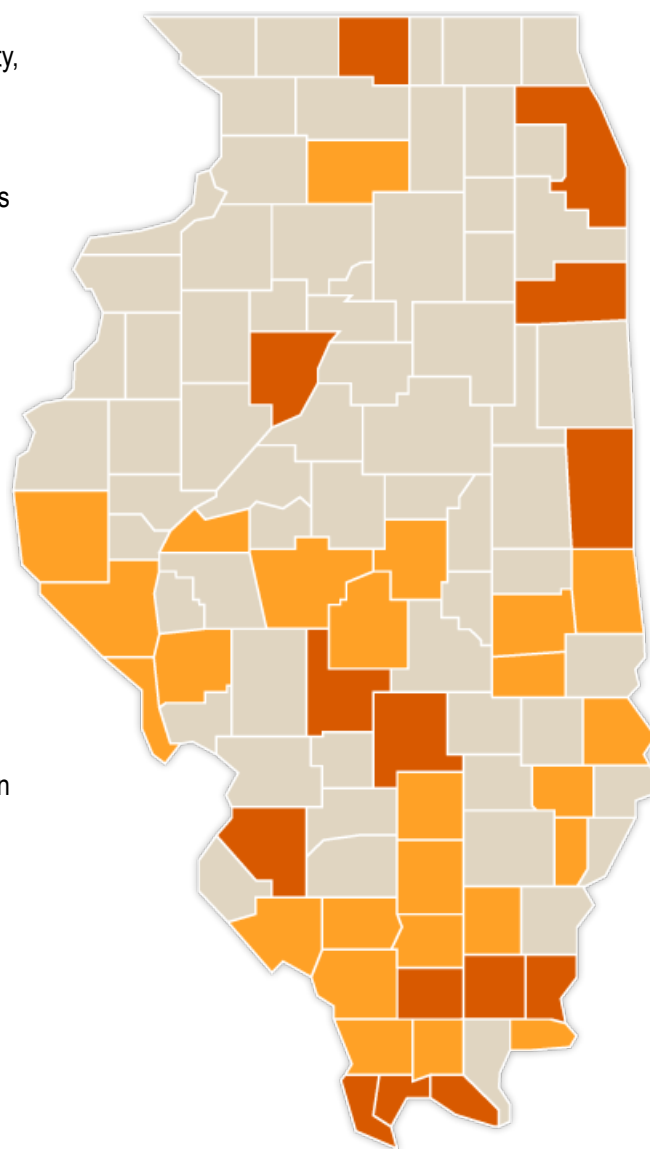
# COUNTY WELL-BEING INDEX

Get county data from the  
**Report on Illinois Poverty Website:** [www.ilpovertyreport.org](http://www.ilpovertyreport.org)

The County Well-Being Index highlights counties that are experiencing particularly negative conditions and trends on four key indicators: poverty, unemployment, teen births, and high school graduation.

Counties in Illinois are evaluated using a point system, with a higher number of points indicating a worse score. A county receives a point if its rate is worse than the state average and/or if it has worsened since the previous year.

**This year, 39 out of 102 Illinois counties are on either the Poverty Watch or Poverty Warning lists.**



## WATCH LIST

County has an indicator score of 4 or 5 and needs to be monitored.

- |              |             |            |
|--------------|-------------|------------|
| • Adams      | • Franklin  | • Marion   |
| • Calhoun    | • Greene    | • Perry    |
| • Cass       | • Hamilton  | • Pike     |
| • Christian  | • Hardin    | • Randolph |
| • Coles      | • Jackson   | • Richland |
| • Crawford   | • Jefferson | • Sangamon |
| • Cumberland | • Johnson   | • Union    |
| • Edgar      | • Lee       |            |
| • Edwards    | • Macon     |            |



## WARNING LIST

County has an indicator score of 6, 7 or 8 and needs to initiate corrective action.

- |             |              |              |
|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| • Alexander | • Massac     | • St. Clair  |
| • Cook      | • Montgomery | • Vermilion  |
| • Fayette   | • Peoria     | • Williamson |
| • Gallatin  | • Pulaski    | • Winnebago  |
| • Kankakee  | • Saline     |              |

The **Report on Illinois Poverty Website** ([www.ilpovertyreport.org](http://www.ilpovertyreport.org)) is a user-friendly portal that gives easy access to county-level data related to poverty & income, employment, education, housing, health & nutrition, and assets. Build fact sheets or spreadsheets customized to your community and selected indicators, then print, PDF, or share via email and social media.



# DATA SOURCES & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## Data Sources

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- <sup>2</sup> Rank, M.R., & Hirschl, T.A. (1999). The likelihood of poverty across the American adult life span. *Social Work*, 44, 201-216.
- <sup>3</sup> Social IMPACT Research Center's analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's 2007 and 2011 American Community Survey 1-year estimates program.
- <sup>4</sup> Constitution of the State of Illinois, Preamble. Available at [www.ilga.gov/commission/lrb/conmain.htm](http://www.ilga.gov/commission/lrb/conmain.htm).
- <sup>5</sup> Illinois Department of Employment Security. *Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS)*. Available at <http://mi.ides.state.il.us/laus/lausmenu.htm>. Seasonally adjusted.
- <sup>6</sup> Hoynes, H.W., Page, M.E., & Stevens, A.H. (2006). Poverty in America: Trends and explanations. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 20(1), 47-68.
- <sup>7</sup> Mishel, L., Bivens, J., Gould, E., & Shierholz, H. (2012). *The state of working America 12th edition*. Economic Policy Institute. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- <sup>8</sup> Mishel, L., Bivens, J., Gould, E., & Shierholz, H. (2012). *The state of working America 12th edition*. Economic Policy Institute. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- <sup>9</sup> Hoynes, H.W., Page, M.E., & Stevens, A.H. (2006). Poverty in America: Trends and explanations. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 20(1), 47-68.
- <sup>10</sup> Mishel, L., Bivens, J., Gould, E., & Shierholz, H. (2012). *The state of working America 12th edition*. Economic Policy Institute. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- <sup>11</sup> Illinois State Board of Education. (2012). *2012 Illinois State Report Card*. Available at <http://webprod.isbe.net/ereportcard/publicsite/getsearchcriteria.aspx>. The non-graduation rate is the inverse of the 4-year graduation rate, which is 82.3%.
- <sup>12</sup> Mishel, L., Bivens, J., Gould, E., & Shierholz, H. (2012). *The state of working America 12th edition*. Economic Policy Institute. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- <sup>13</sup> Mishel, L., Bivens, J., Gould, E., & Shierholz, H. (2012). *The state of working America 12th edition*. Economic Policy Institute. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- <sup>14</sup> Social IMPACT Research Center's analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's 2011 American Community Survey 1-year estimates program.
- <sup>15</sup> Half in Ten. (2012, November). *The right choice to cut poverty and restore shared prosperity*. Half in Ten Annual Report. Washington, DC: Author.
- <sup>16</sup> Mishel, L., Bivens, J., Gould, E., & Shierholz, H. (2012). *The state of working America 12th edition*. Economic Policy Institute. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- <sup>17</sup> Social IMPACT Research Center's analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's 2011 American Community Survey 1-year estimates program.
- <sup>18</sup> Wittenburg, D., & Favreault, D. (2003, November). *Safety net or tangled web: An overview of programs and services for adults with disabilities*. Occasional Paper #68. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.
- <sup>19</sup> Himmelstein, D.U., Thorne, D., Warren, E., & Woolhandler, S. (2009). Medical bankruptcy in the United States, 2007: Results of a national study. *The American Journal of Medicine*, 122(8), 741-746.
- <sup>20</sup> CFED. (2012). *2012 Assets & opportunity scorecard*. Available at <http://scorecard.assetsandopportunity.org/2012/state/il>.
- <sup>21</sup> CFED. (2012). *2012 Assets & opportunity scorecard*. Available at <http://scorecard.assetsandopportunity.org/2012/state/il>.
- <sup>22</sup> Fellowes, M. (2006). *From poverty, opportunity: Putting the market to work for lower income families*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program; and CFED. (2012). *2012 Assets & opportunity scorecard*. Available at <http://scorecard.assetsandopportunity.org/2012/state/il>.
- <sup>23</sup> Social IMPACT Research Center's analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's 2011 American Community Survey 1-year estimates program.
- <sup>24</sup> Social IMPACT Research Center's analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's 2011 Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates. These are the most recent poverty data available to compare all counties.
- <sup>25</sup> Social IMPACT Research Center's analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, and 2011 American Community Survey 1-year estimates program.
- <sup>26</sup> Social IMPACT Research Center's analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's 2011 American Community Survey 1-year estimates program.
- <sup>27</sup> Social IMPACT Research Center's analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's 2007-2011 American Community Survey 5-year estimates program.
- <sup>28</sup> Social IMPACT Research Center's analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's 2011 American Community Survey 1-year estimates program.

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